



# *Iowa Outdoors*

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
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**Dec. 14, 2004**

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## **LAKES SLOWLY BEGINNING TO ICE OVER**

DES MOINES – Ice arrived at Clear Lake Tuesday morning and anglers are hoping this time, it stays. Temperatures are predicted to moderate for the rest of this week, then turns colder on Sunday.

“By next week, if we stay cold enough, we could have minimal ice in places for ice fishing. That’s not a guarantee, only a prediction,” said Jim Wahl, fisheries biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources at Clear Lake. “It is hard to predict, but I hope it locks in this time for good. For this area, we are at least two weeks behind normal. Maybe even three weeks.”

In northwest Iowa, there were still pockets of open water on East Okoboji and Spirit Lake. “But I would guess that we will have a lot of people driving around the lake, checking out the ice,” said Jim Christianson, fisheries biologist at Spirit Lake.

The DNR follows the recommendation of the Lumberman’s Safety Association and other sources for ice strength.

2 inches of clear, solid ice is usually safe for one person walking

4 inches of clear, solid ice is usually safe for ice fishing

5 inches of clear, solid ice is usually safe for snowmobiling

8 inches of clear, solid ice is usually safe for a car or light truck (less than 2-1/2 tons)

12 inches of clear, solid ice is usually safe for a medium truck (3-1/2 tons)

“Never assume ice is safe,” said Rod Slings, recreation safety program supervisor with the DNR. “Ice thickness is not uniform on any body of water. My advice is to cut a lot of test holes and to not go out alone. You are not only putting yourself in danger, but you are risking the lives those who will have to rescue you.”

Off colored or slushy ice is a sign of weakness. Anglers fishing lakes with aeration systems should use extra caution if fishing near the open water. Wind and wave action can erode ice quickly. What was 10 inches of ice yesterday could be dangerous ice today.

“Don’t push it and put yourself in a dangerous situation,” Wahl said. “It just isn’t worth it.”

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## **THE PERFECT, LAST-MINUTE HOLIDAY GIFT: A 2005 IOWA FISHING LICENSE**

DES MOINES - Iowa fishing licenses go on sale tomorrow, Dec. 15, just in time for last-minute shoppers looking for an extra holiday gift.

“Now is the perfect time to purchase an annual fishing license for a friend or family member,” said Marion Conover, chief of the DNR’s fisheries bureau. “At just \$17.50 for Iowa residents, it’s an affordable gift that will last all year long.”

Fishing is a great way to relax or spend time with family, Conover said. Iowa has thousands of lakes, rivers and ponds with excellent fishing opportunities within a few minutes of most Iowa towns.

Licenses can be purchased online at [www.iowadnr.com](http://www.iowadnr.com); by calling 800-367-1188; or at more than 900 license vendors across the state.

For more information about Iowa fishing opportunities and licenses, go to: [www.iowadnr.com/fish/](http://www.iowadnr.com/fish/)

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